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ABSTRACT

The group that is properly set-up and operating can save hours of group time. Once the group members know and trust one another it is necessary to identify the specific group tasks that need to be accomplished and to establish ground rules such as kind of meeting, meeting arrangements, expectations of members, and requirements for membership in the group. The accurate recording of minutes can be achieved by using group-memory techniques. Decision-making by consensus is a useful strategy in arriving at good solutions and strong implementation efforts because of the involvement of group members. An effective group environment includes the physical surroundings and a general climate of informality, friendliness, and trust. Facilitator guidelines, worksheets, and exercises are contained in appendixes. (Author/IRT)

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A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS KIT

PAK #1.2 - ORGANIZING THE COMMITTEE AND GETTING TO WORK

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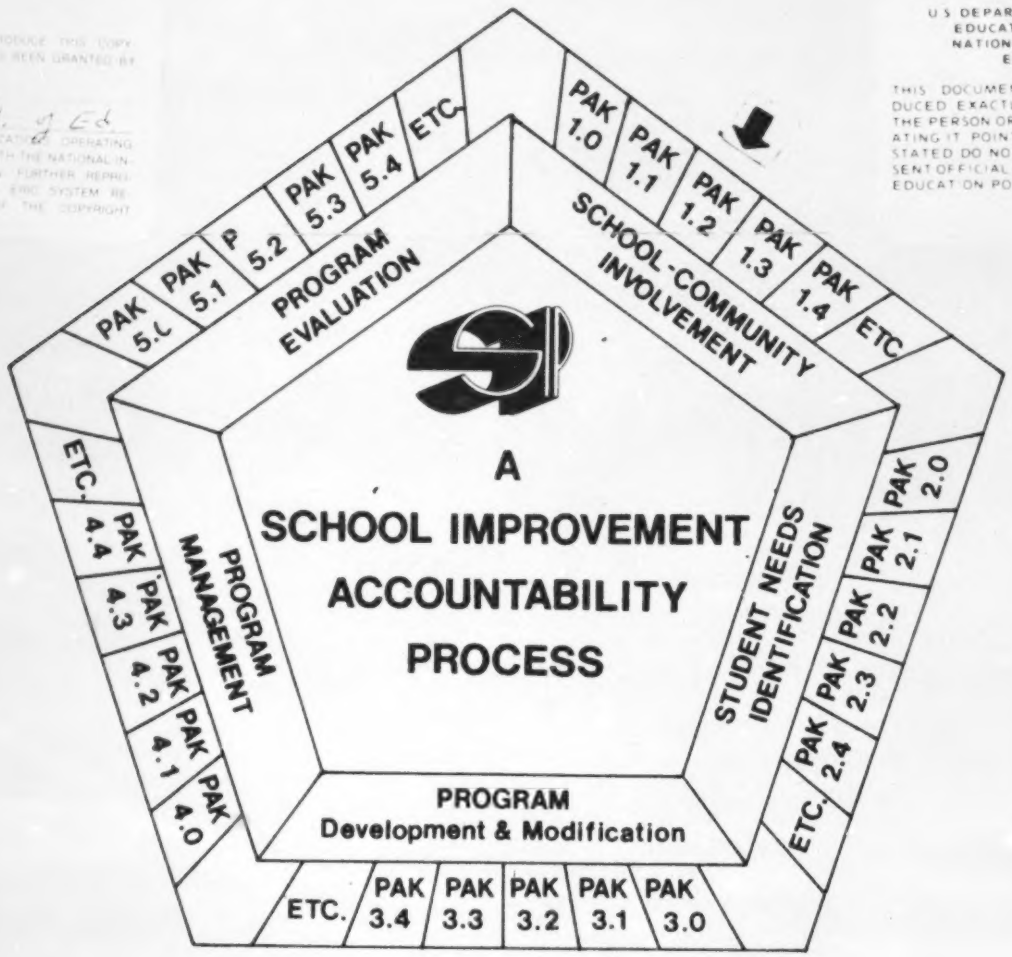

Personalized Activity Kit (PAK) for use as:

- Individualized Study Guide
- Small Group Study Guide
- Workshop Facilitator's Guide

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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EA 009 718

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A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS KIT

PAK #1.2 - ORGANIZING THE COMMITTEE AND GETTING TO WORK

ACCREDITATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES UNIT

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Denver, Colorado
July 1975

This PAK was written in 1973 by members of the District Planning and Accountability Services Unit.

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DIRECTIONS FOR THE USE OF THE PAK

Each PAK is designed to be used in three alternative ways: 1) an individual user can work through the packet on his own; 2) a small group may work co-operatively; or, 3) a group of participants may be involved in a workshop situation under the leadership of a facilitator. Experience indicates that the latter is the most desirable situation. While an individual may work through the materials on his own, he misses those shared experiences which come as learners interact in a group situation.

PLEASE NOTE

Because this PAK will be used by many people in your district, please mark only the worksheets supplied by your instructor. Do not mark the pages of this PAK. Sample transparencies and worksheets (for duplication) are included in Appendices A and B.

If you are using PAK materials in a group workshop situation, consult Appendix A for detailed instructions. The diagram on the cover page and diagrams for Appendix A may be used to make overhead transparencies.

If you are working through the PAK individually, follow the general directions listed below:

- Read content of the PAK.
- Refer to Appendix A, page 2, for additional instructions.
- Do the exercises on worksheets copies from Appendix B. (when included)
- Read the bibliography (when included).

ORGANIZING THE COMMITTEE AND GETTING TO WORK

Purpose

Much has been learned in the past two decades about involving people in group work. Making certain that the group is properly set and operating from the beginning can save hours of group time. This series deals with aspects of group process, basic communication skills and styles of leadership. It is well to remember that should the trust relationship be broken, group effectiveness will diminish until a new trust can be established. An underlying trust in the other members of the group is an essential precondition for effectiveness.

A Foundation of Trust

Effective groups do not just happen. In order for a group to function properly, with each person dedicated and contributing, some very basic arrangements and relationships must be set up. Extremely important among these is a climate of trust.

Many people approach a group situation with varying degrees of uncertainty and anxiety and a set of feelings which must be overcome before they can personally contribute to the group. Some elements of trust are built upon knowledge -- about the purposes of the group, the background of its members, and more importantly, a feeling of belonging to the group. Additional elements of trust develop as people have successful experiences within the group. They become more confident about their contributions to the group's efforts and, therefore, more trusting. Group members must believe that each individual has characteristics worthy of trust.

GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP A GROUP

1. Determine the tasks (mission) of the group.

   Often confusion arises in a group because no one knows what kind of a meeting is being held or why it was called. One of the first orders of business is to determine what the group is to accomplish at that particular meeting.

   An effective procedure is to have each member of the group indicate his own perceptions of the task of the group. Record these on a big sheet of paper on the wall. After each has had his turn, arrive at a consensus. This task list can be referred to in subsequent meetings when some members stray from the task.

2. Establish ground rules.

People are generally more comfortable when they can openly discuss and agree on how they want to operate as a group. Encourage the group to establish its own ground rules.

Some basic decisions that need to be made include the following:

a. There are several types of meetings; each calls for its own procedures and type of leadership. Examples are:

- PROBLEM-SOLVING (leader/recorder)
- DECISION-MAKING (leader/recorder)
- PLANNING (leader/recorder)
- INFORMATIONAL (chairman)
- FEEDBACK/EVALUATION (chairman,moderator)
- TRAINING SESSION (trainer)

-- What type of meeting will it be?
-- What kind of leadership will be appropriate for this meeting?
-- What procedures are suitable for this meeting?

b. Meeting arrangements?

-- Where will the meetings be held?
-- How often and what time?
-- How long will each meeting last?
-- For what length of time will the group continue to function?

c. Responsibilities of members?

-- What frequency of attendance is expected?
-- What demands on members' time will be likely outside the group?

d. Membership in the group?

-- Will new members be admitted?
-- How will new arrivals be oriented?
-- How many members must be present to make a decision for the entire group?

While not all of these questions must be dealt with immediately, they will eventually need to be examined. As they are resolved, group members will feel more certainty about how the group operates.

3. Use group-memory techniques to establish accurate group minutes.

> *Group memory techniques are procedures whereby each member of a group states what he remembers or perceives concerning the group's activities, decisions and/or progress. After each member has contributed, the group discusses any differences and reaches agreement. This becomes the memory of the group rather than the memory of any one individual.*

One of the often-heard complaints of groups is that the minutes of the meeting do not accurately reflect what took place at the meeting. Group-memory is an effective technique for assuring accuracy of the minutes and promoting group participation.

This involves keeping a record of what is said on large sheets of paper on the wall. These sheets can be torn from butcher paper rolls or newsprint purchased in pads. The important thing is that what is recorded is open, referred to, and available for all to see and discuss. It becomes "the group's minutes," not one person's minutes. Ideas need not be recorded word for word, but it is essential that the group agrees with the recorder's version of the ideas.

In addition, group memory techniques:

Serve as a visual record of the progress of the meeting.

Respect individuals -- anybody's idea is important enough to write down.

Depersonalize ideas.

Serve as a psychic release and free people to hear other ideas.

Encourage individuals to remain open to the viewpoints of others.

Provide a permanent record of the meeting.

In order to assure the success of this technique the group must assume at least three major responsibilities:

- see that their ideas are accurately recorded
- see that the leader and the recorder remain neutral and do not manipulate the group
- focus all their energy on the problem

4. Determine consensus procedures.

> *Consensus means general agreement within the group.*

Consensus procedures lie at the heart of group decision-making and action. It is important to note that consensus does not mean complete agreement on a given issue. Consensus is a useful strategy for decision-making in democratic task groups. It often leads to better solutions and stronger implementation because of greater involvement of group members. It may require more time and effort, but the results usually justify the extra trouble in the long run.

Decision by consensus can be thought of in three stages:

1. getting out the information
2. finding a solution
3. checking for agreement.

There are skills that can be developed that correspond with each of these three stages.

Members must approach issues with the idea that they can accomplish their personal goals while other members also accomplish their desired aims. This approach is called a win/win strategy, because it works with the cooperative assumption that both parties can reach goals without negating or blocking other groups. It contrasts with the win/lose position which assumes that "if you move toward your goal, it automatically keeps me from reaching mine."

Here are some general guides which will assist you in reaching consensus using the basic win/win strategy wherein both parties are generally satisfied and no one is completely disgruntled:

a. Do not assume that someone must win at the expense of someone else losing when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the most acceptable alternative for all parties.

b. Avoid techniques such as majority votes, averages, trading, and bargaining which result in apparent but not real consensus. When a dissenting member finally agrees to a solution, don't feel that he/she must be rewarded by being given his/her own way later.

c. Avoid arguing for your own individual judgments. Approach the task on the basis of logic and facts.

d. Avoid changing your mind only in order to reach agreement and avoid conflict. Support only solutions with which you are able to agree somewhat, at least.

e. View differences of opinion as helpful rather than as a hindrance in decision-making.

Try to involve everyone in the decision-making process. Disagreements can help form the group's decision, since there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon more adequate solutions through digesting a wide range of information and opinions.

5. Establish an effective group environment.

This includes the establishment of ground rules and consensus procedures. It also includes an opportunity for group members to express their ideas and feelings at the first meeting rather than have feelings fester and erupt at repeated intervals throughout the process.

This can be accomplished by dividing into small groups. Have each group list on newsprint their concerns or problems about what it is to do (mission). These can then be reported out and discussed openly.

Blank name tags should be provided at the initial meeting so that group members can print or write their names on the tags. They should be advised to write the name they want to be called on their tags rather than their formal titles.

Individuals deserve the courtesy of an introduction. This should be accomplished in a way so that they feel comfortable about their participation in the group. In this way members learn about each other, thus aiding in group identification and a feeling of group commonality. A suggestion might be to pair off the group, give the pairs five minutes to find out the essentials (include their expectations for the group) about each other and report it to the group. This is most important even in cases where group members have known each other for years.

Every agenda should be open and discussed prior to the meeting. This permits additions, deletions, and/or clarifications before anything is considered. It also reduces group member uneasiness.

The size of each group and the functions it is to perform should dictate the meeting room arrangements; however, some general considerations are in order.

a. Try to arrange for a "neutral setting. Recreation buildings, club rooms and the local banks are often available. This tends to place everyone on an equal footing.

b. Accommodations should be comfortable, relaxing, informal.

c. Participants should be encouraged to dress informally, casually, comfortably.

d. Have refreshments available during the meeting instead of taking breaks.

e. Seating arrangements should fit the purpose of the meeting:

-- semi-circles or circles are best
-- focus the meeting away from the door
-- focus the group on the group memory skills
-- put small groups in small rooms, large groups in large rooms.

6. Establish communication channels.

It is most important for each committee member to recognize his responsibility not only to the committee but also to the group he represents. To be a good representative one must know the ideas and feelings of the group he represents and be able to communicate these to the committee. He must also be aware of his responsibility to report back to the group he represents what the committee is doing.

7. Additional hints for a more effective meeting include:

a. At least one week before the first meeting -- set the time, secure a room, and send out a notice with a preliminary agenda.

b. Come early -- set up and arrange the room -- bring the supplies in -- set up the sheets for the group memory exercise -- greet people.

c. Start on time.

d. Revise the agenda. Why are we here? What do we want to accomplish?

e. Set a time limit -- how long will it take?

f. Organize the revised agenda. What's important to deal with first? A suggested breakdown for meetings:

   1. Information sharing/reporting

   2. Problem-solving/decision-making

   3. General discussion

   Important: Deal with only one item at a time.

g. Assign tasks.

h. Check with everyone -- how do they feel?

i. Review accomplishments of the meeting, summarize and seek agreement. (Group Memory Techniques)

j. Set the next meeting time and date and develop a preliminary agenda.

k. Take the group-memory minute sheets off the wall and transcribe them. Mail the minutes, meeting notice, and preliminary agenda to the participants.

l. Put the room back in order.

SUMMARY

The group that is properly set up and operating can save hours of group time in later stages of the group's work. Trust relationships among the members must be developed every early if the group is to function effectively.

Once the group members know and trust one another there are specific group tasks to be accomplished. It is necessary to identify these tasks in such a way that group consensus is reached. It is also important to establish ground rules such as kind of meeting, meeting arrangements, what is expected of members, and requirements for membership in the group.

The accurate recording of minutes can be achieved by using Group-Memory Techniques. It is the group's responsibility to see that their ideas are adequately recorded.

Consensus procedures are useful strategies which often result in better solutions and stronger implementation due to greater involvement of group members. Decision by consensus includes three stages: (1) getting out the information; (2) finding the best solution; and (3) checking for honest agreement.

An effective group environment deals with the physical surroundings and a general climate of informality, friendliness and trust. It is better to let members express feelings at the first meeting than to have these feelings erupt in a later meeting. A well-planned meeting is more likely to give members a sense of satisfaction.

List of Training Models for Practice in Using Group Process Techniques

AMP, Advanced Motivation Program.

This program is a group process approach to motivation and voluntary behavioral change. AMP involves a seminar with laboratory experiences for teachers, administrators, students and school/community members. Write to: W. Clement and Jesse V. Stone Foundation, 111 East Wacker Drive, Suite 510, Chicago, Illinois.

Practice in Using Communication and Problem-Solving Skills.

This workshop is designed for educators and concerned citizens who are engaged in improving the quality of education and who require skills enabling them to define and understand a problem, as well as skills in communicating effectively with one another in working toward problem solution. Write to: School Improvement Process - Accountability Team, Colorado Department of Education. State Office Building, Denver, Colorado 80203

Human Effectiveness Training.

This training is designed to increase the effectiveness of persons in the skills and methods required to build and maintain good human relationships. Write to: Effectiveness Training Associates, 110 South Euclid Avenue, Pasadena, California 91011.

Values Clarification Workshop.

This workshop is designed to train teachers, administrators and counselors in the examination of personal value systems and how to handle value conflicts. The Advanced Workshop is designed to train trainers to conduct the basic workshop. Other workshops available include Personal Growth Workshop and Human Relations-Wilderness Laboratory. Write to: Values Associates, P.O.Box 43, Amherst, Massachusetts 01022; Human Values Institute, 601 Broadway, Suite #414, Denver, Colorado 80203

APPENDIX A

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE FOR GROUPS

Each PAK has been organized around a fundamental and widely recognized generalization of how people learn. Learning occurs more efficiently when an overview is presented first. Succeeding learning experiences then take the person deeper into each concept adding more specific details. There may be several levels of exposure until real expertise is developed.

Workshop Specifications

I.	Time Required:	Two hours
II.	Facilities:	One room for each 24 participants. Participants to be seated at tables (maximum of six per table). Rooms should provide adequate accoustics and physical comfort suitable for a workshop session.
III.	Equipment & Material Needs:	One overhead projector and viewing screen per room
		Power extension cord (1 per room)
		Transparency sheets
		Grease pencils
		Butcher paper
		Masking tape
		Chalkboard, chalk, eraser
		Name tags (if necessary)

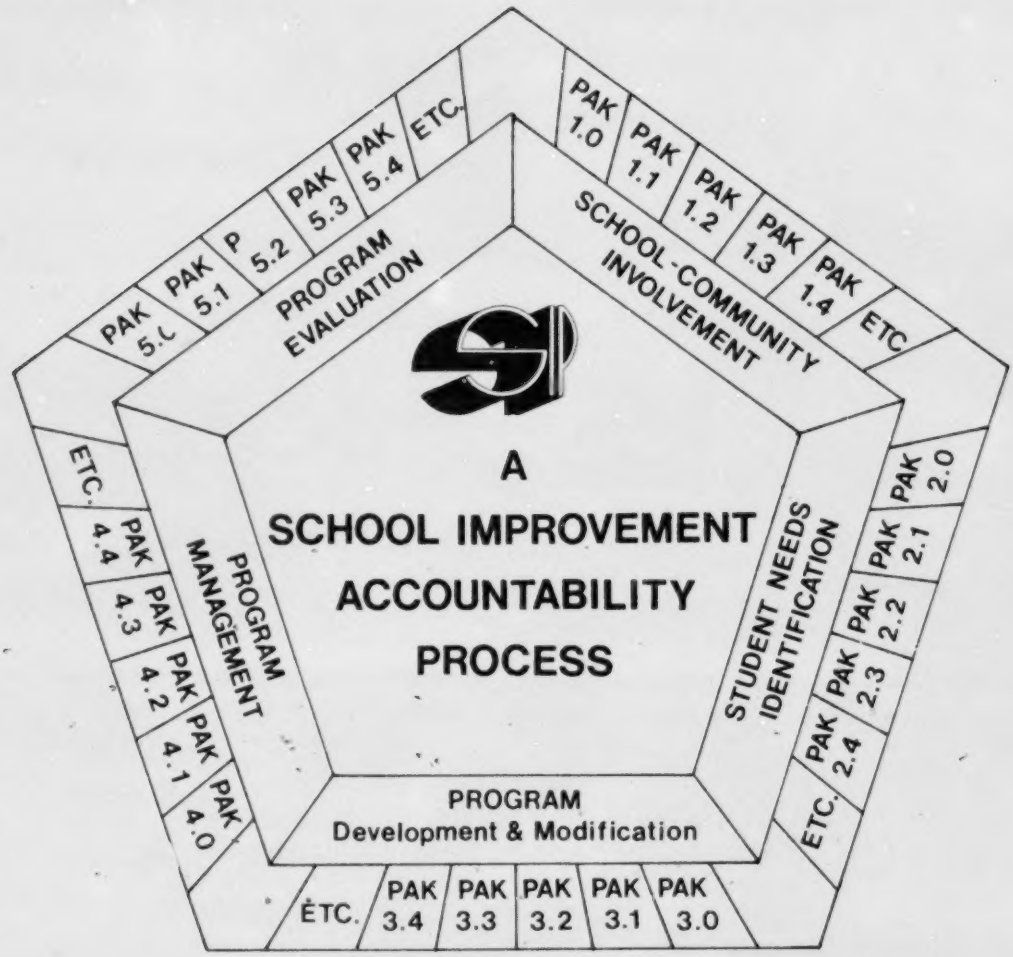
Workshop Activities for PAK #1.2

The following sequence of activities is suggested and may be modified at your discretion.

1.	20 min.	Have participants read the materials on pages 1 - 7. Share questions and reactions.
2.	20 min.	Divide into small groups to do Exercise #1, Appendix B - 1. However, if the trainer feels there is value in having the entire group become better acquainted, then do not divide into smaller groups.
3.	60 min.	Individually and in small groups complete Exercise #2, Appendix B - 1 and B - 2. Participants may focus upon the training session group itself or upon another group of which they are all members (professional organizations, faculties). Follow the directions given on the exercise sheet.
4.	20 min.	Call attention to the Summary and bibliography. Remind participants to complete the PAK critique form in Appendix B and turn it in to you.

NOTE: As quickly as possible, review the critique forms for feedback information that may be helpful during other workshops.

Total time: Approximately 2 hours


A
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
ACCOUNTABILITY
PROCESS
PROGRAM EVALUATION
PAK 5.0
PAK 5.1
P 5.2
PAK 5.3
PAK 5.4
ETC.
SCHOOL-COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
PAK 1.0
PAK 1.1
PAK 1.2
PAK 1.3
PAK 1.4
ETC
STUDENT NEEDS IDENTIFICATION
PAK 2.0
PAK 2.1
PAK 2.2
PAK 2.3
PAK 2.4
ETC.
PROGRAM Development & Modification
ETC.
PAK 3.4
PAK 3.3
PAK 3.2
PAK 3.1
PAK 3.0
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
ETC.
PAK 4.4
PAK 4.3
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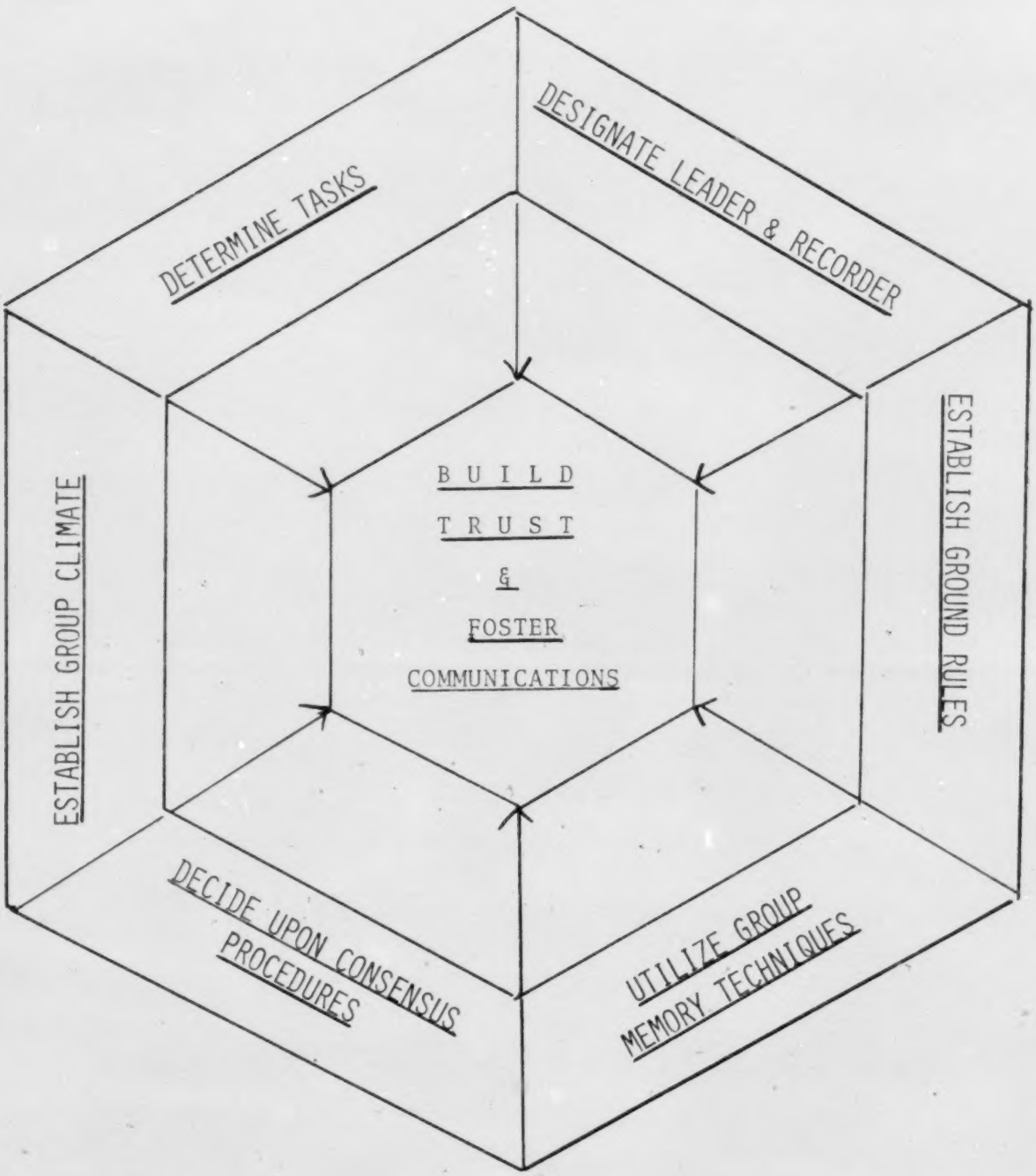
DETERMINE TASKS
DESIGNATE LEADER & RECORDER
ESTABLISH GROUP CLIMATE
ESTABLISH GROUND RULES
B U I L D
T R U S T
&
FOSTER
COMMUNICATIONS
DECIDE UPON CONSENSUS PROCEDURES
UTILIZE GROUP MEMORY TECHNIQUES

APPENDIX B

PAK 1.2 Exercise 1

Introductions

Recognizing that an introduction with basic information about each person is a step toward the establishment of a group process climate, this exercise asks each person to introduce another person to the entire group.

Directions to participants working in groups:

Participants are to divide into pairs. They are to prepare introductions about each other including:

1. Name
2. Community
3. Occupation
4. Particular interests, hobbies or "claim to fame"
5. Family
6. Anything else of interest

Take 3 - 5 minutes to talk and then 1 - 2 minutes to tell the group about the person you have interviewed. Proceed with introductions until all in the group have been introduced.

PAK 1.2 Exercise 2

Group Tasks

Prior to attempting to take action as a group it is essential that each person be informed as to exactly what the group is supposed to do at that particular meeting. One very useful way to accomplish this is to have group members specify what they feel to be the tasks of the group. Group members can refer to this information in later stages as the need arises.

Divide participants into small groups. Individually fill out a worksheet like the one in Appendix B, page 3. Appoint one person as a recorder.

1. Next, each member shares his perceptions of the tasks so that the recorder can make a complete list.

   Note: Remember it is the group's responsibility to see that all ideas have been accurately recorded.

2. In your small groups, refine the task list until consensus is reached.

3. Now, using large sheets of butcher paper, each small group should post on the wall its task consensus list.

4. As a large group, refine the several lists until consensus on one master list of tasks is reached.

Exercise 2: Worksheet

1. List the group's tasks as you perceive them.

Exercise 2: Worksheet

1. List the group's tasks as your group perceives them.

PAK #
(Please fill in number)

PAK CRITIQUE FORM

Please give your assessment and comments on the following:

PROGRAM ELEMENT	OUT-STANDING	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR	VERY POOR	COMMENTS
1. The quality & relevance of the subject matter.						
2. The appropriateness and usefulness of the instructional materials.						
3. The timing or sequencing of the various items presented.						
4. The directing and assistance given on the exercise.						

Other comments or suggestions for improving this PAK:

If this PAK was used as part of a WORKSHOP training session, then please also complete the following:

PROGRAM ELEMENT	OUT-STANDING	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR	VERY POOR	COMMENTS
5. The deployment, grouping or planned interaction of the participants.						
6. The productivity and/or usefulness of the individual work-session(s).						
7. The comments or assistance given to you on your selected problem.						